

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 01678 240140Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 PRS-01  
USIA-06 /084 W  
-----007881 240604Z /23

R 240100Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8834  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
CINCPAC  
AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1678

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, 4 DIMPTD  
TAGSC SHUM PINS MOPS LA VM  
SUBJECT: FIGHTING IN THE VANG VIENG AREA

1. SHELL OFFICIALS TOLD US DECEMBER 22 THAT LARGE STOCKS OF FUEL WERE REMOVED FROM STORAGE TANKS AT VIENTIANE'S WATTAY AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 22 AND TRANSPORTED NORTH BY HELICOPTER AND FIXED WING AIRCRAFT.
2. SHELL EMPLOYEES WERE TOLD BY LAO AUTHORITIES THAT THE FUEL WAS BEING TAKEN TO THE VANG VIENG AREA TO MEET URGENT NEEDS CREATED BY HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE AREA.
3. EARLIER IN DECEMBER, A LAO WITH CONTACTS AMONG RANKING PATHET LAO MILITARY CIRCLES SAID THAT HMONG TRIBESMEN HAD RECENTLY LOST STRATEGIC POSITIONS IN THE PHU BIA REGION TO ASSAULTS BY COMBINED LAO AND VIETNAMESE FORCES. THIS REPORT SAID THAT THE HMONG  
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DEFENDERS TOOK HEAVY CASUALTIES IN THE DEFEAT.

4. UNHCR OFFICIALS AND A EUROPEAN JOURNALIST TOLD US IN OCTOBER OF A SETTLEMENT OF 1,500 HMONG TRIBESMEN WHO HAD RECENTLY ARRIVED IN (OR BEEN BROUGHT TO) THE VANG VIENG AREA WHERE THEY WERE BEING PREVENTED FROM RETURNING TO THEIR HIGHLAND HOMES. (COMMENT: THIS PRACTICE

APPEARS TO BE WIDESPREAD IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LPDR  
POLICY OF FORCING HIGHLAND PEOPLES INTO LOWLAND AREAS  
WHERE THESE PEOPLES POSE LESS POTENTIAL SECURITY  
PROBLEMS. END COMMENT)

5. THE VISITORS DESCRIBED CONDITIONS AT THE SETTLEMENT  
OF 1,500 HNONG AS VERY BAD. ONE UNHCR OFFICIAL TOLD US  
IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT THE LPDR "GIVES THEM RICE AND  
NOTHING ELSE." HE NOTED THAT "A MEDIC" VISITS THE EN-  
CAMPMENT ON AN IRREGULAR BASIS FROM VANG VIENG.

6. COMMENT: THE "FIGHTING" (PARA 2) PRESUMABLY PITS  
LPLA AND PAVN UNITS AGAINST HMONG IRREGULARS IN THE  
HIGHLANDS SOUTH AND EAST OF VANG VIENG. IT IS ALSO  
POSSIBLE THAT THE ENCAMPMENT OF 1,500 HMONG IS CREATING  
DIFFICULTIES FOR LAO AUTHORITIES IN THE VANG VIENG AREA  
ITSELF.  
ROBERTS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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